

AKIRA

22

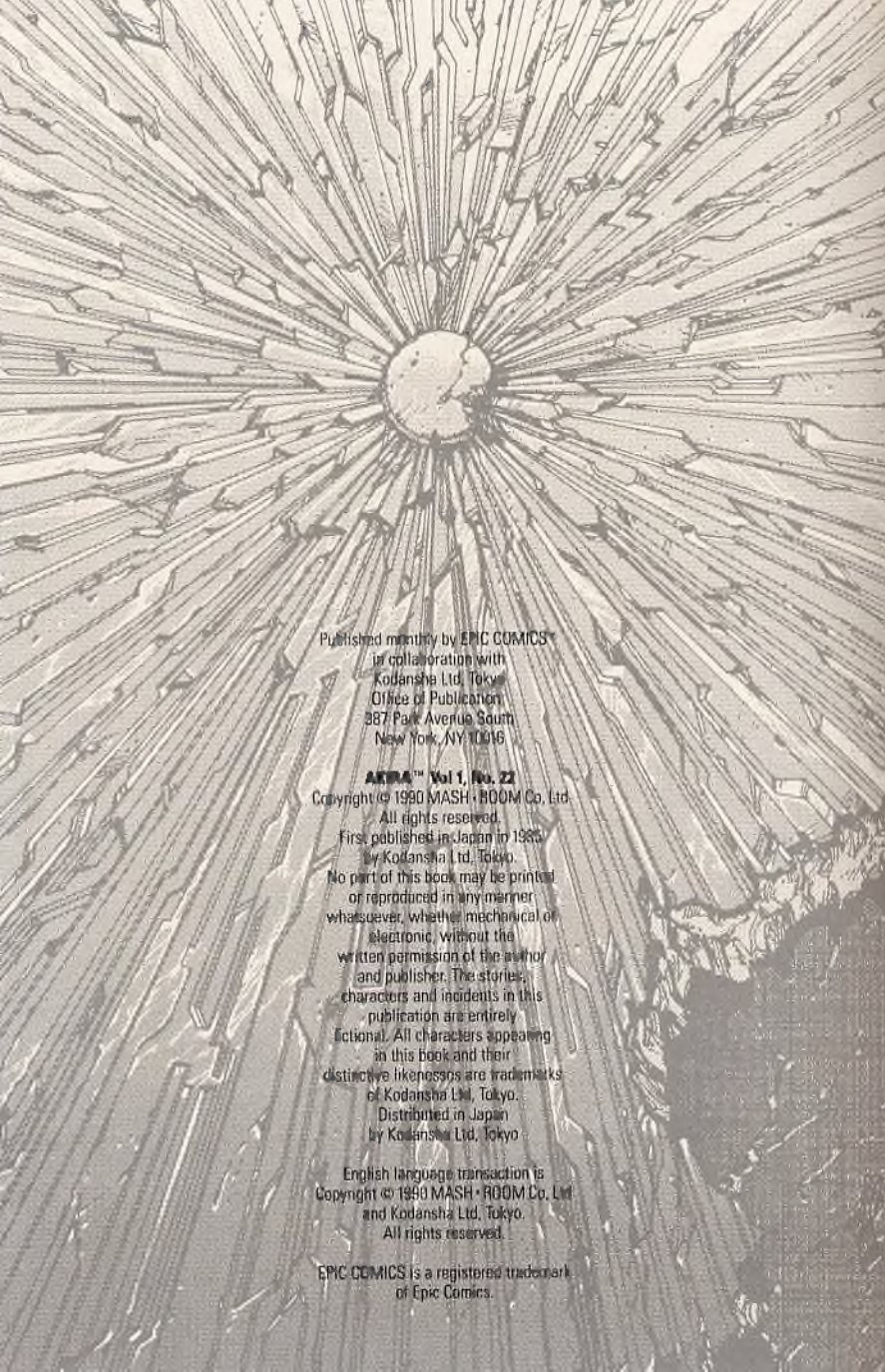
TM



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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 22

BLOOD SIEGE

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Twenty-thirty. The world stands poised at the edge of World War IV. An explosion of thermonuclear proportions has been set off in **Neo-Tokyo**. The world, particularly the superpowers, wonders what has happened. In **Neo-Tokyo**, in a section known as the "old city", a band of teen-aged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encounters **Number 26**, a child named **Takashi** who uses extraordinary telekinetic abilities to injure **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends.

As a result, **Kaneda** and **Tetsuo** become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by the **Colonel** and an underground resistance group bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities.

Among the resistance, **Kaneda** meets **Kay**, her "brother" **Ryu**, and a formidable woman named **Chiyoko**. Other important resistance leaders include Ryu's superior—the opposition leader **Nezu**—and a powerful religious leader with precognitive gifts, **Lady Miyako**.

The **Colonel** has a number of psychic children under his control. Each child is identified by a number marked on the hand. At one time **Lady Miyako** was **Number 19** in this series. **Number 28** is **Akira**, so powerful that since the war he has been suspended in cryogenic sleep.

The Colonel's staff conducts experiments which awaken tremendous telepathic potential in **Tetsuo**, who is redubbed **Number 41**. Able to shrug off the most serious injuries, **Tetsuo** goes on a killing spree, murdering one of Kaneda's friends and even attacking **Kaneda**. Then, followed by **Kay** and **Kaneda**, **Tetsuo** seeks out **Akira**, whose powers he thinks may rival his own. When Tetsuo reaches Akira's resting place, the cryogenic chamber cracks from within, and **Akira**—dazed and docile following his long sleep—emerges.



Akira



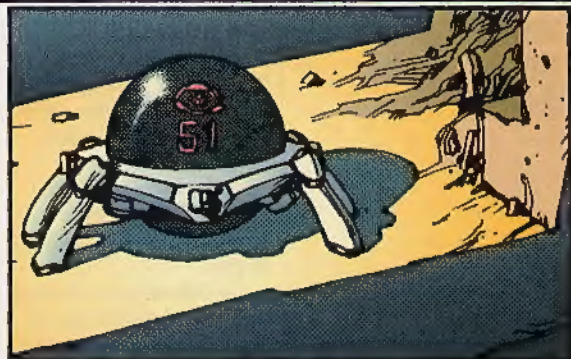
Kay



The Colonel



Chiyoko



The **Colonel** summons the powerful SOL military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**, but the laser strikes Tetsuo's left arm. **Neo-Tokyo** is placed in a state of military emergency following the disaster. "Caretaker robots" patrol the streets, dealing harshly with the looters and restoring order.

Nezu betrays the resistance, planning to kidnap and exploit **Akira**. But he is thwarted first by a team of young psychics and then by **Ryu**, who guns his former master down. The resistance fighters and **Akira** are cornered by the Colonel's troops, but all seems well when **Takashi** fondly greets **Akira** and reintroduces him to their fellow psychics **Kiyoko** and

Masaru. Then **Nezu**, dying and determined for revenge, arrives and tries to kill **Akira**. He accidentally kills **Takashi** instead.

The trauma of **Takashi's** death galvanizes **Akira**, who fully awakens and unleashes a coherent light blast powerful enough to devastate the entire city. Acting quickly, **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** sweep most of the people in the area upward, and **Kaneda** is last seen vanishing toward the sky. In the wake of the disaster, **Lady Miyako** opens her temple and offers shelter and comfort to those in need, gathering large groups of followers in the East.

Neo-Tokyo is completely cut off from the outside world, and in the western part of the city the Great Tokyo Empire is formed—a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo**



Tetsuo



Tetsuo's Aide



Lady Miyako



Ryu

as his Prime Minister. The Empire is eventually infiltrated by teams of spies sent from outside to learn what is happening in the city.

The **Colonel** is alone, living in hiding. **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** are sick with withdrawal from the drug which augments and channels mental powers, and **Kiyoko** tells **Kay** to find **Number 19**. The two meet with **Lady Miyako**. She gives them medicine to help **Kiyoko** and **Masaru**, and asks that **Kay** bring the two psychics to her.

Most of the spies from the outside are hunted down and killed. Only their leader, **Lt. Yamada**, escapes. When **Tetsuo's** followers are on the verge of catching **Yamada** again, **Ryu** appears and leads him to safety. **Ryu** attempts to gain **Yamada's** trust, but the **Lieutenant** refuses to tell **Ryu** who has sent him or let **Ryu** join him. **Yamada** does, however, reveal that Russia has conquered part of Japan, and that the Americans' fear of **Akira** makes them reluctant to get involved.

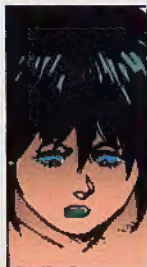
Three young girls are taken from the breadline and given to **Tetsuo** for his pleasure. He orders the girls to swallow capsules of mind-altering drugs. Only one girl—**Kaori**—who

palms her capsule survives. Under the influence of the drugs, **Tetsuo** relives his past. He sees visions of the present and the possible future as well. Afterwards, believing that his mental resonance with **Akira** is responsible for the odd mental voyage, **Tetsuo** looks into the mind of his Emperor. He emerges a withdrawn, shuddering wreck. Once recovered, **Tetsuo** decides that **Lady Miyako**—whose mind he also briefly touched—may be able to explain matters to him. Taking a hefty dose of power-enhancing medication, **Tetsuo** teleports to the temple of the religious leader. **Lady Miyako** recounts to him the experiments decades earlier which created the numbered psychics from human children. She states that the designations in the twenties were reserved for those of the greatest power. **Lady Miyako** also reveals that World War III began with a mental blast from **Akira** which destroyed Tokyo and killed the scientist who created the psychics. Finally, she warns **Tetsuo** that he alone can control **Akira's** near-inconceivable powers...but must first give up the drug crutch. Disgusted and perplexed, **Tetsuo** departs.

Kay and **Chiyo** try to



Lt. Yamada



Kaori



Masaru



Kiyoko



move **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** to Lady Miyako's temple. They are attacked by Tetsuo's followers, who escape with **Kiyoko**. **Chi-yoko** rescues the girl, but is badly wounded. **Chi-yoko** and **Kiyoko** are brought to safety by the **Colonel**, who is living in isolation while the last of his scientists attempts to re-establish contact with the SOL satellite. **Chi-yoko**, delirious, tells the **Colonel** to take the child to Lady Miyako's temple, where he'll also find **Masaru**. The **Colonel** departs in a caretaker robot with **Kiyoko**. Meanwhile, with the assistance of Lady Miyako's monks, **Kay** eludes a street gang and safely conveys **Masaru** to the temple. There **Lady Miyako** mysteriously alludes to **Kaneda** and informs **Kay** that although **Kay** herself lacks intrinsic psychic gifts, she serves as a

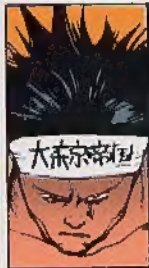
powerful medium for the talents of others.

Ryu and **Yamada** watch the Empire from hiding. They move in when Tetsuo's dapper assistant—disgusted by Tetsuo's lack of interest in the way **Lady Miyako** has thwarted their schemes—leads most of the Empire's men out as an army. **Ryu** and **Yamada** are startled by an encounter with **Tetsuo**, whose withdrawal causes his power to surge erratically. **Ryu** is even more startled when **Tetsuo** blurts out what his telepathy has shown him—that **Yamada** had come to assassinate **Akira**.

Tetsuo's assistant leads his army to Lady Miyako's temple. The army slaughters all in its path—monks, penitents and helpless refugees alike—determined to kill **Lady Miyako** and capture **Kay** and **Masaru**.



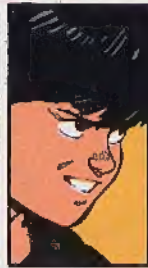
Seer



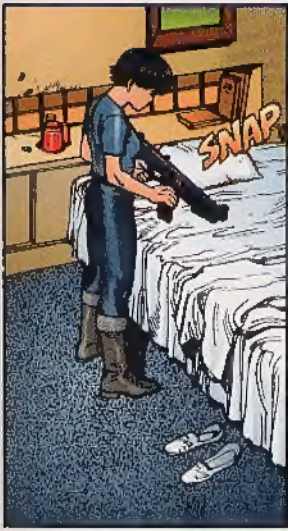
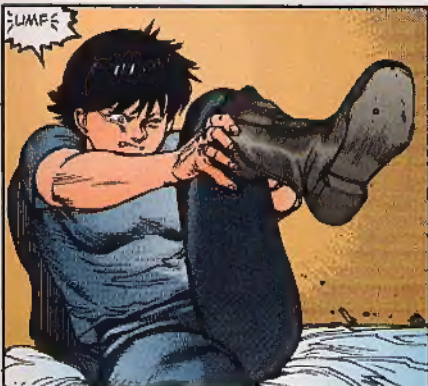
Enforcer

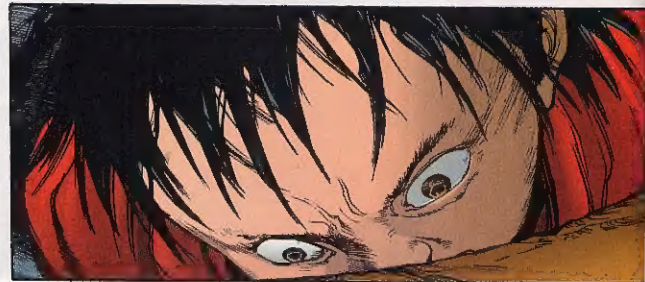


Scientist

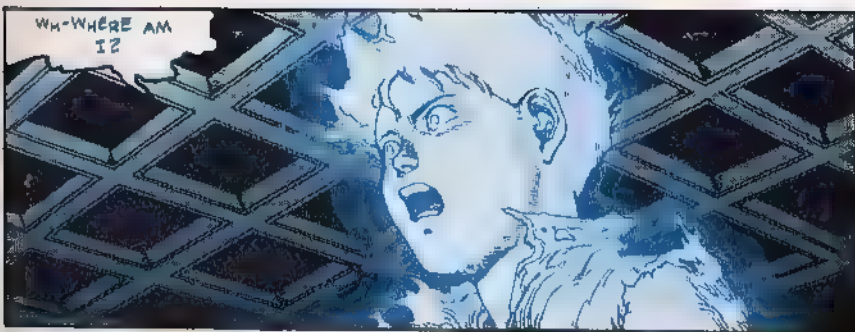


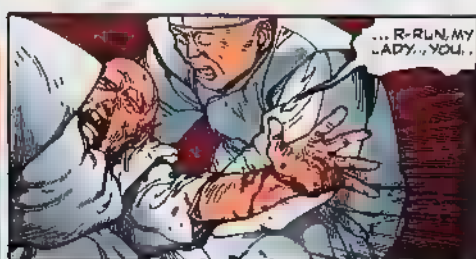
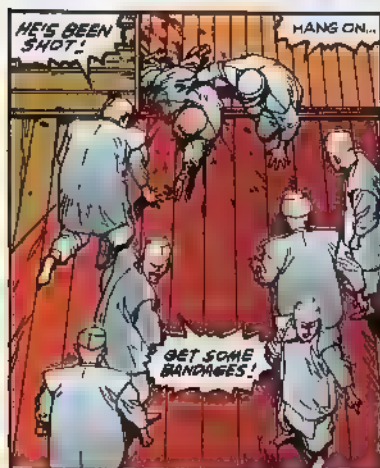
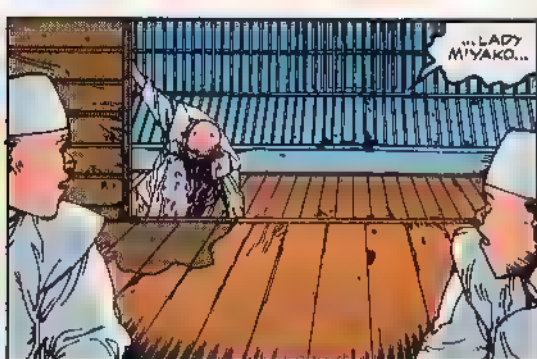
Kaneda











THE FAMOUS LADY
MAYAKO.

I CAN'T TELL YOU
HOW THRILLED I
AM

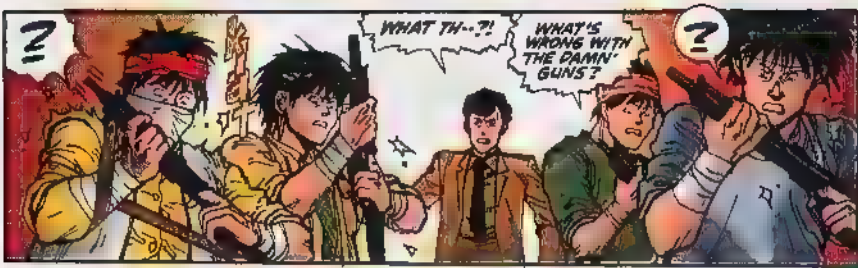
TERRORIST
PIGS!

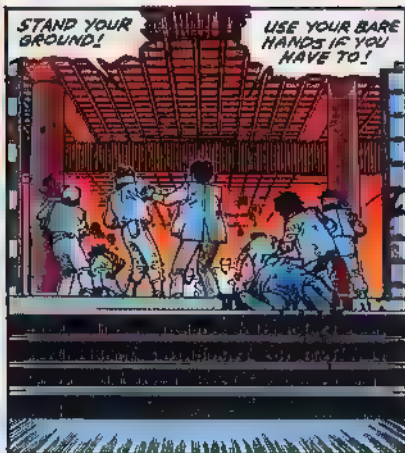
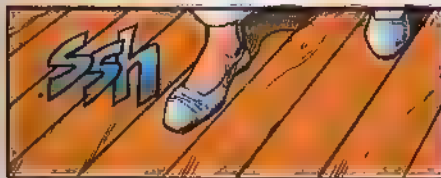
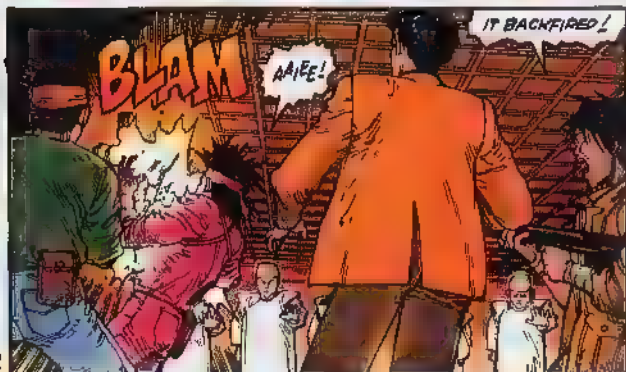
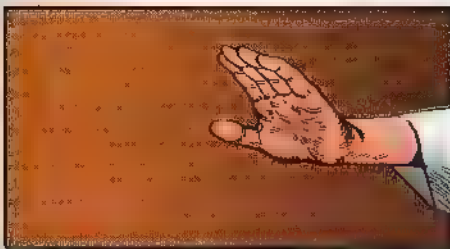
STAY
BACK!

LIKE YOU
CAN MAKE
US!

WHERE ARE
THE WOMAN AND
THE KID?!

DON'T TALK IF YOU
DON'T WANT TO WE'LL
KILL YOU NO MATTER
WHAT YOU SAY







DESTROY THEIR GUNS...

...BUT DON'T HARM THEM!



WE'VE GOT PSYCHICS OF OUR OWN, YOU KNOW!



SEND THEM IN!

YESSIR!

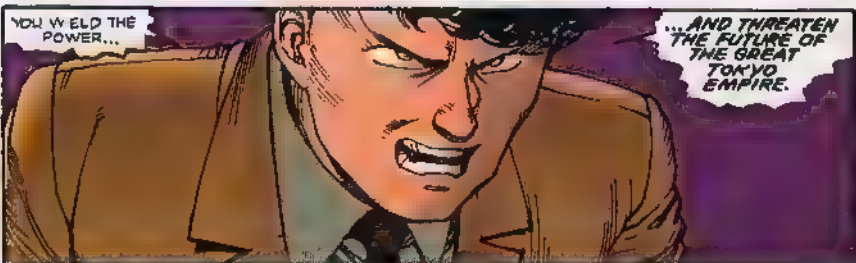


THIS IS POINTLESS!

WHY ARE YOU DETERMINED TO PROLONG THE CONFLICT AND NEED-LESS BLOOD SHED?

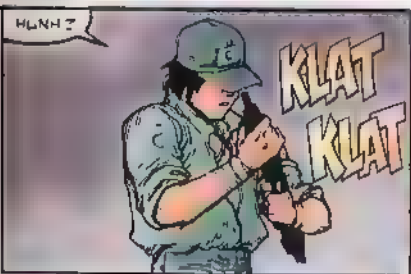
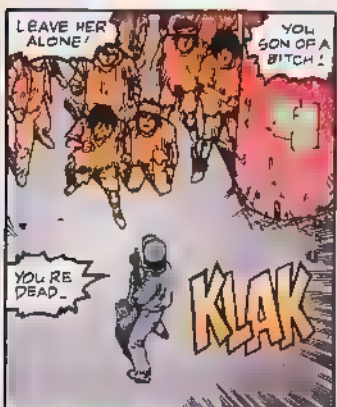
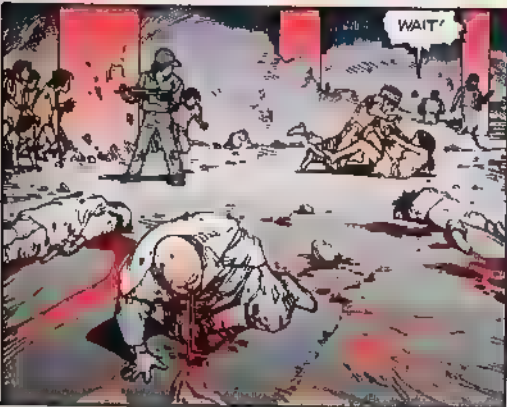


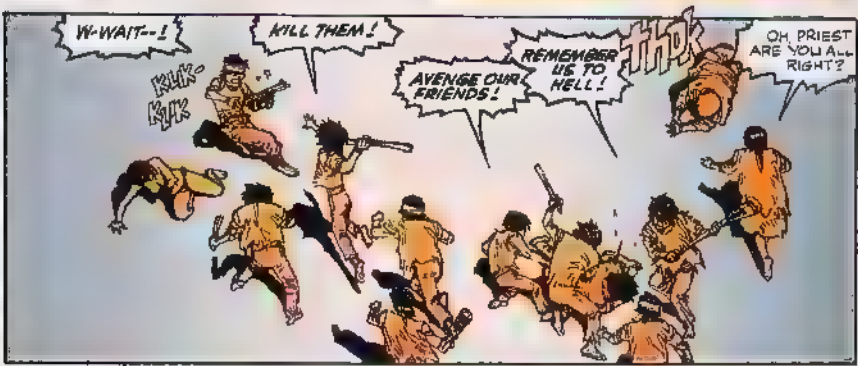
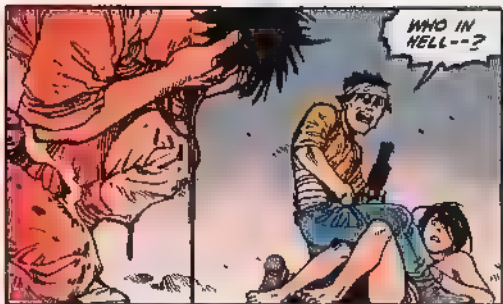
BECAUSE YOU STAND IN OUR WAY!

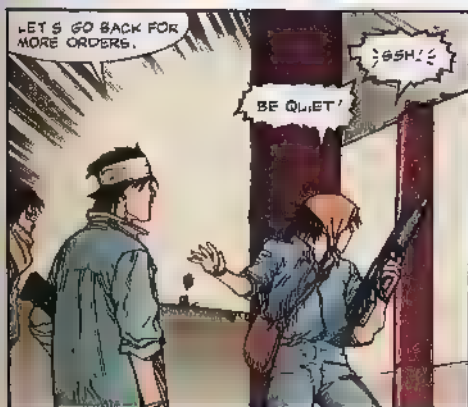
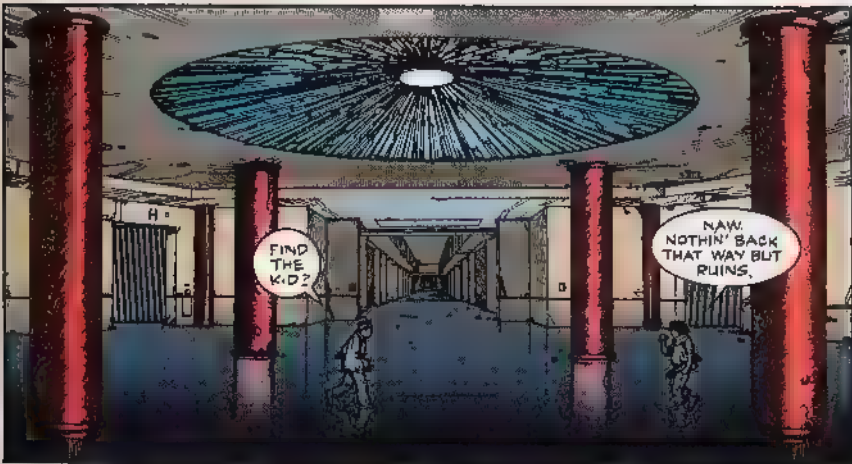


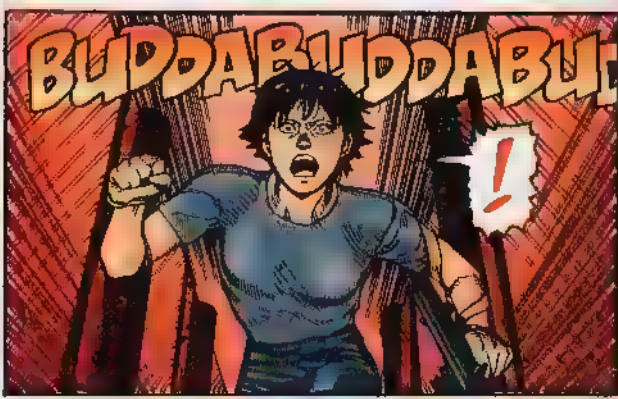
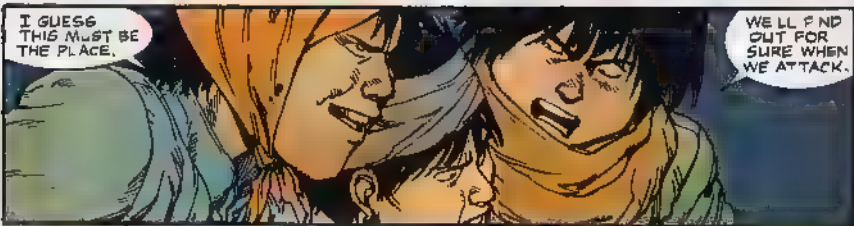
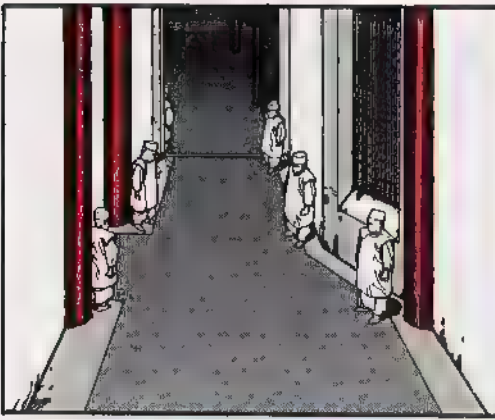
YOU WELD THE POWER...

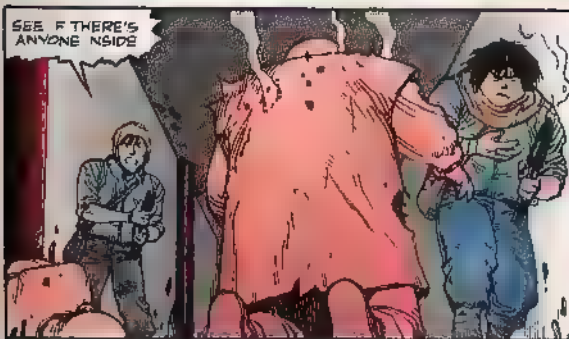
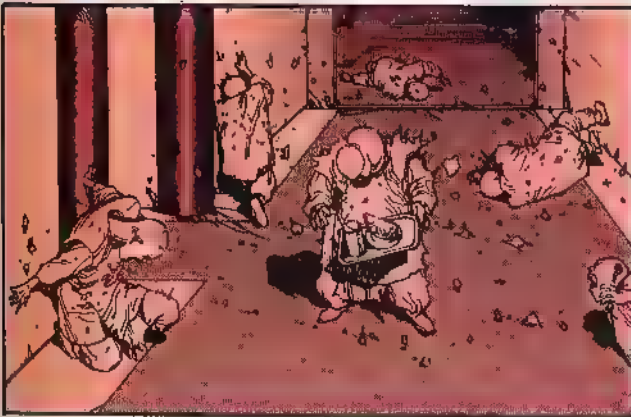
...AND THREATEN THE FUTURE OF THE GREAT TOKYO EMPIRE.

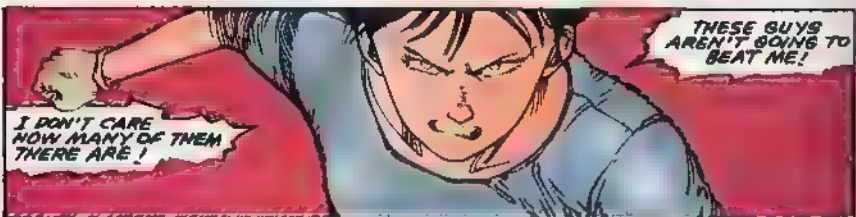
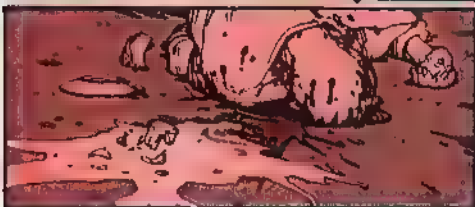
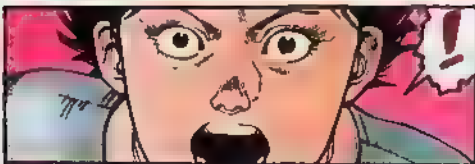
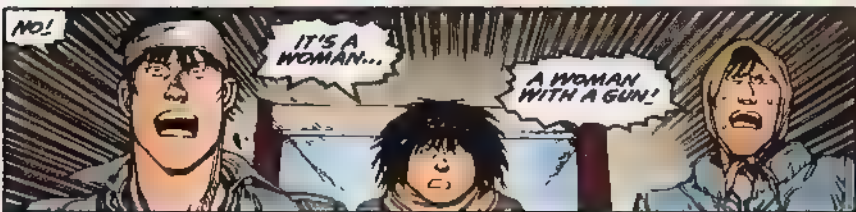
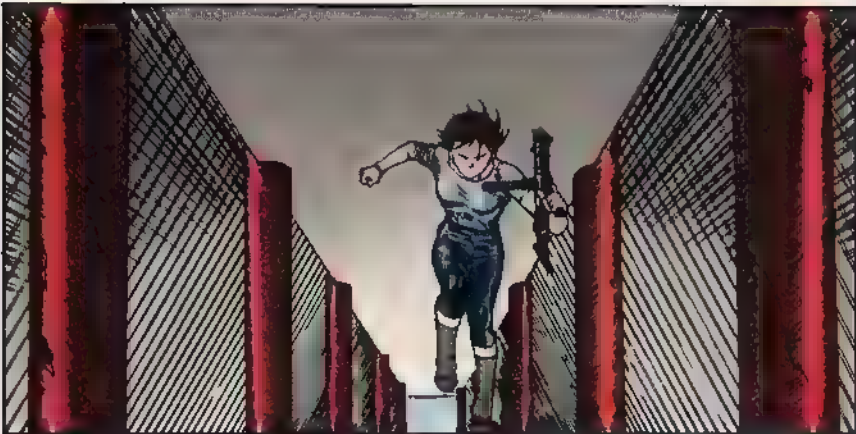


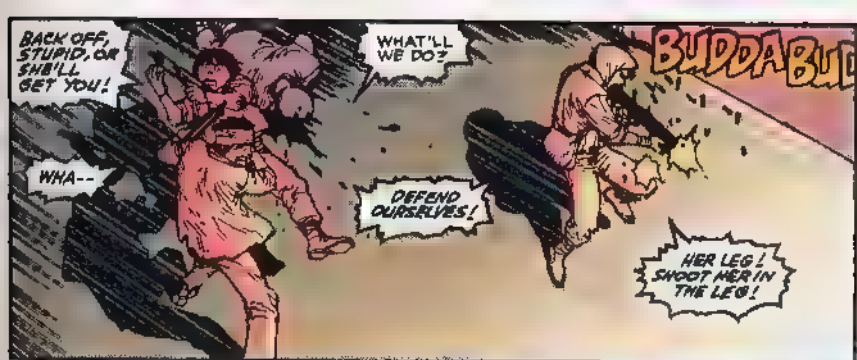


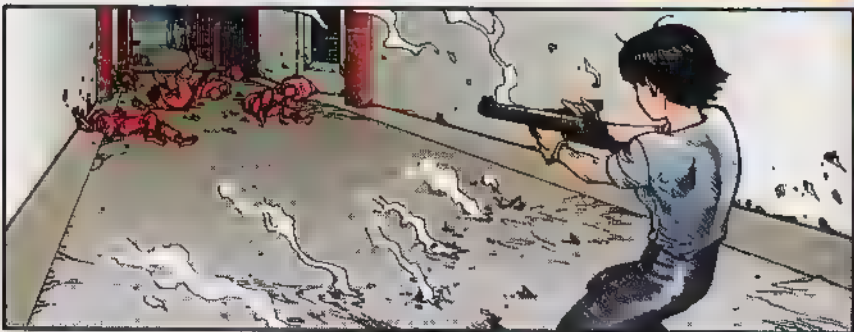
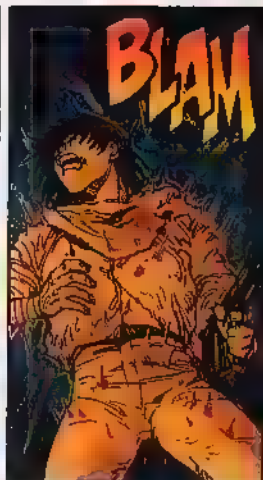
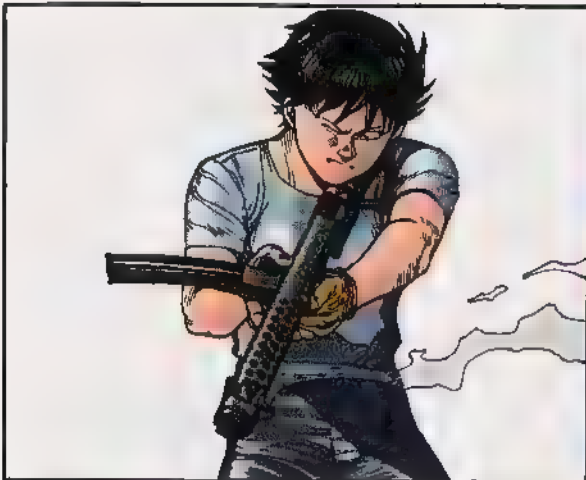


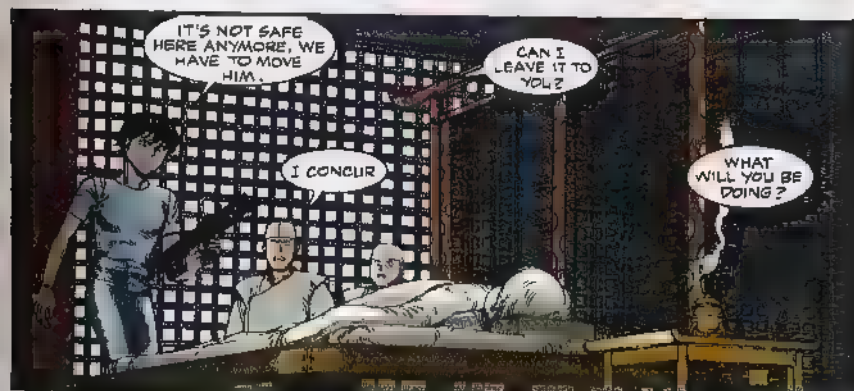












ME 2

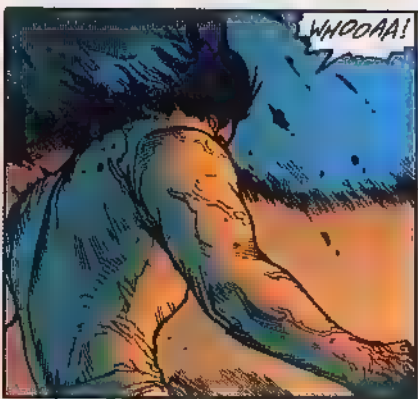
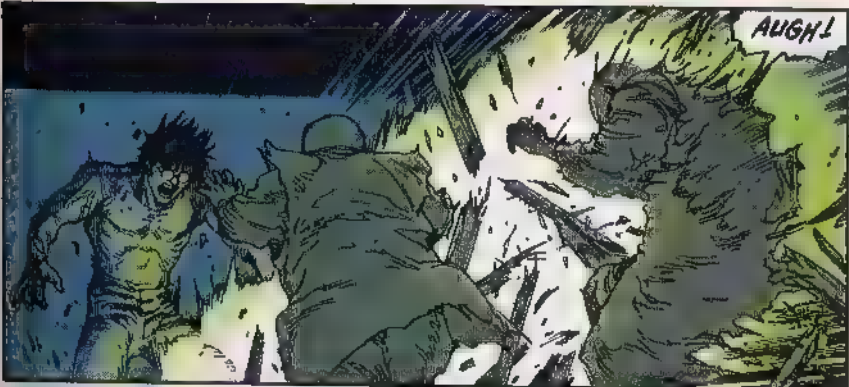
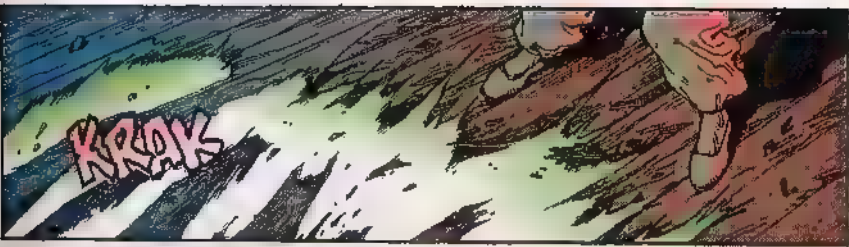
I'M GOING
BACK!

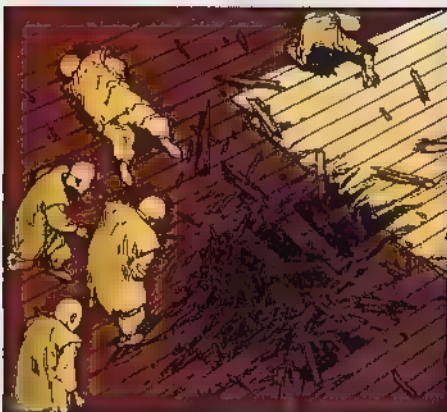
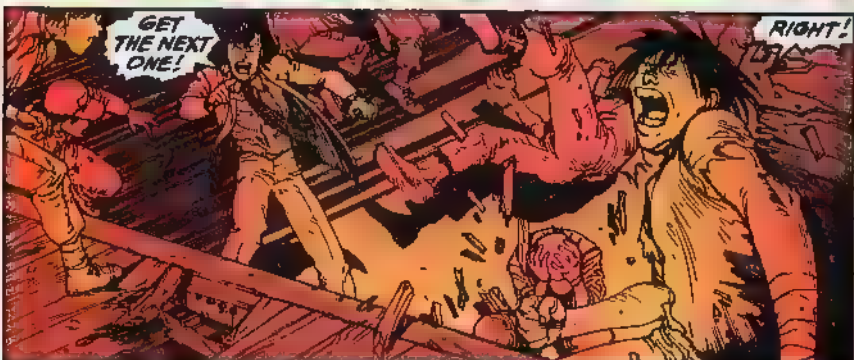
... TO HELP
NUMBER 19!

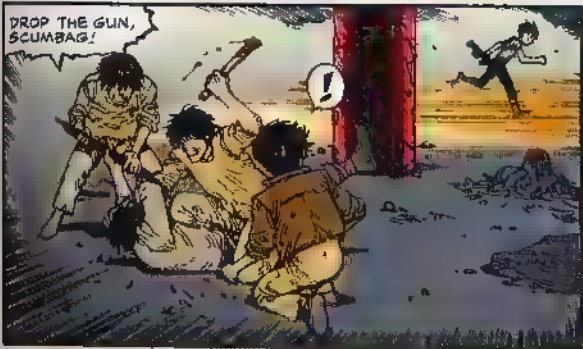
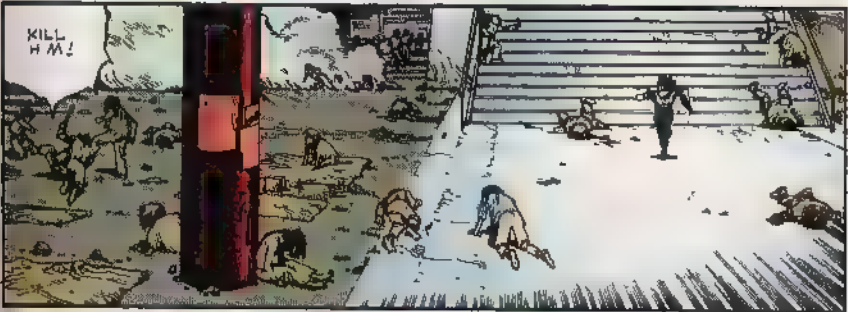
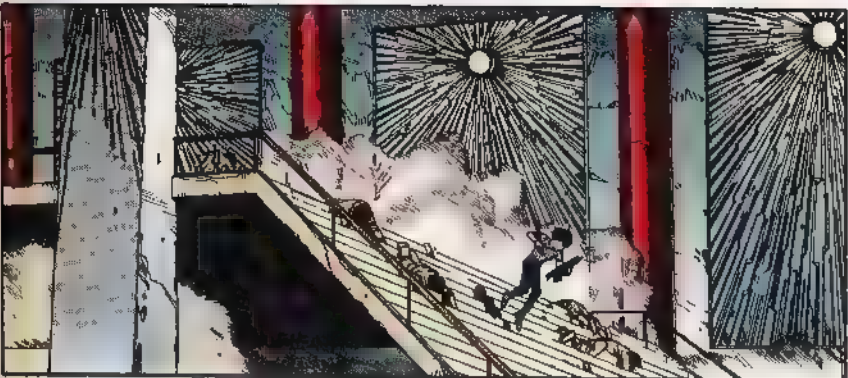
OOWAAAAH!

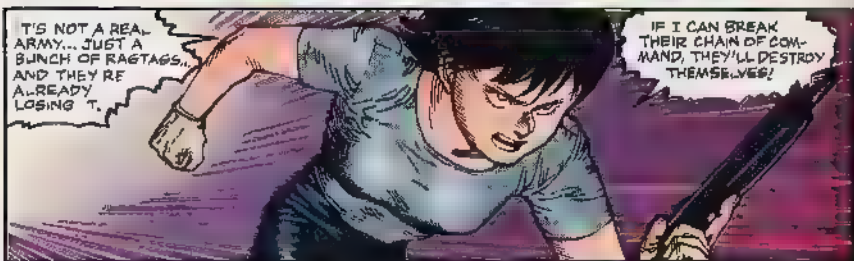
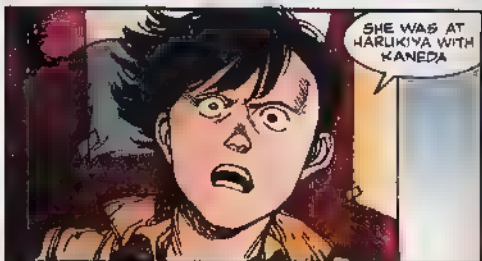
EEX!

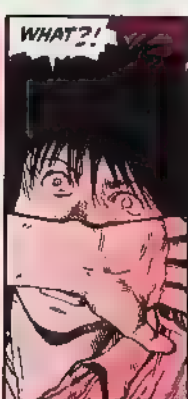
A-AHHH!

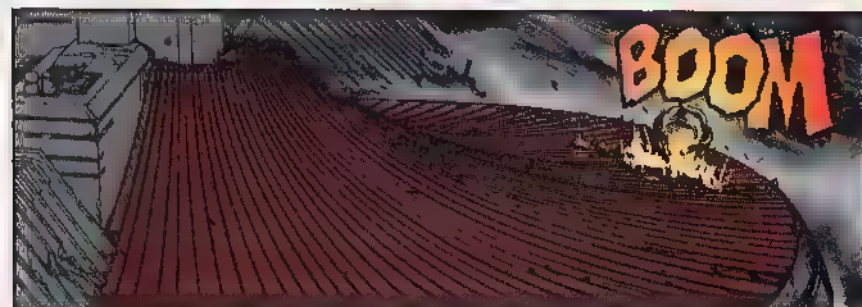
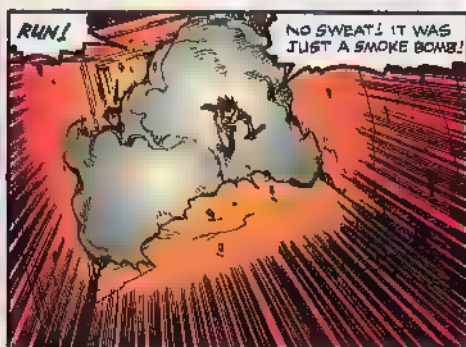






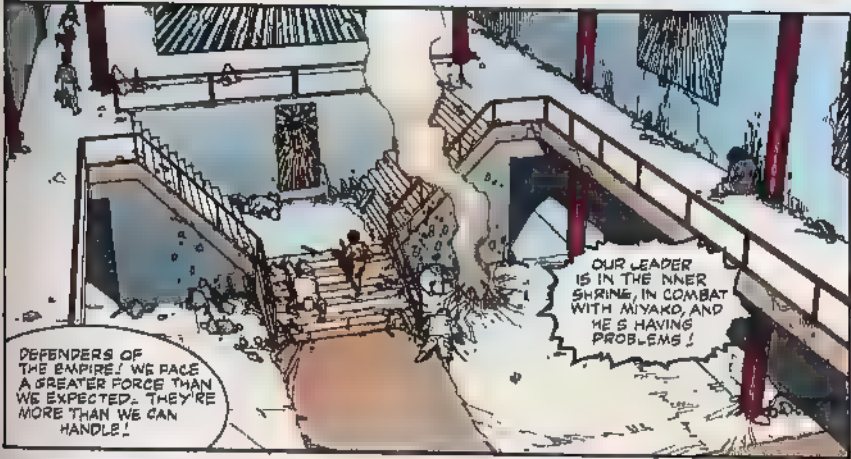








WHERE ARE
THE REST OF
US?
WHERE'S
THE
COMMANDER?

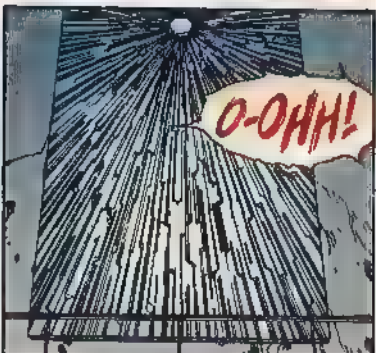


DEFENDERS OF
THE EMPIRE! WE FACE
A GREATER FORCE THAN
WE EXPECTED. THEY'RE
MORE THAN WE CAN
HANDLE!

OUR LEADER
IS IN THE INNER
SHRINE, IN COMBAT
WITH MIYAKO, AND
HE'S HAVING
PROBLEMS!



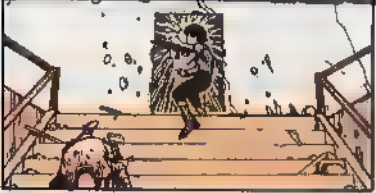
WE MUST UNIFY OUR
FORCES! GATHER
THE MEN!



O-OHH!



TAK



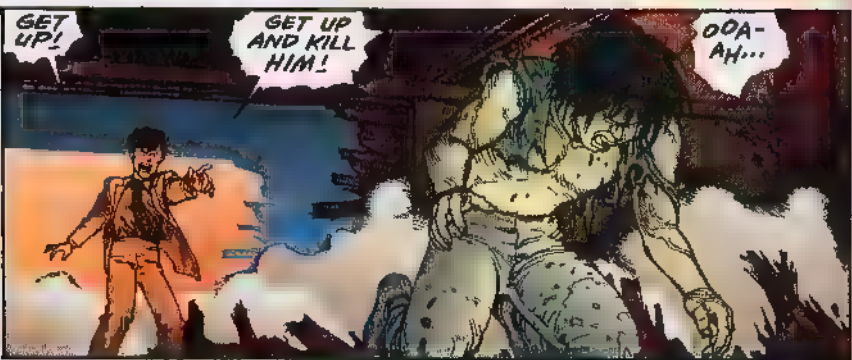


OOAAAH!

...?!...



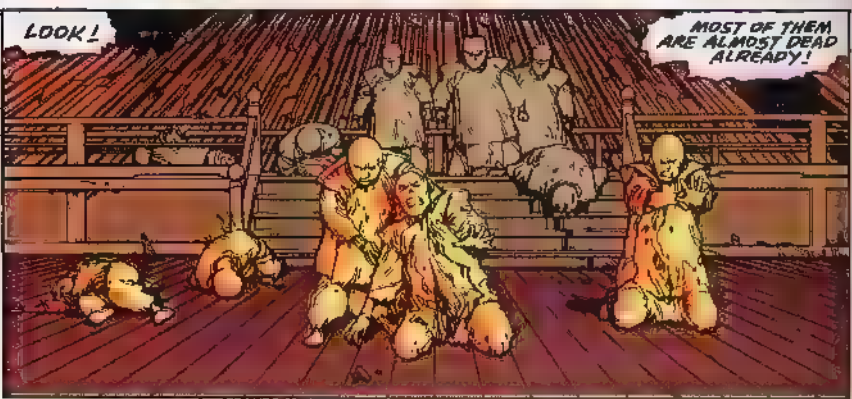
WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
YOU?



GET
UP!

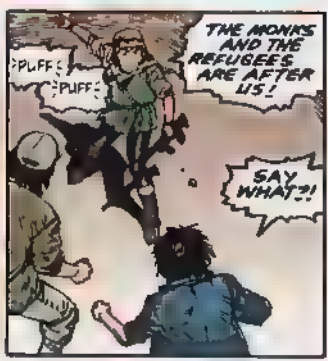
GET UP
AND KILL
HIM!

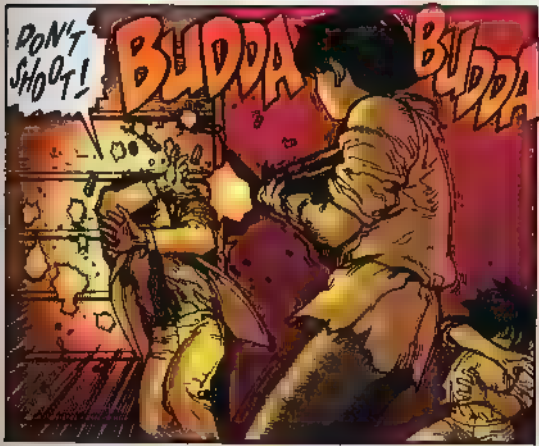
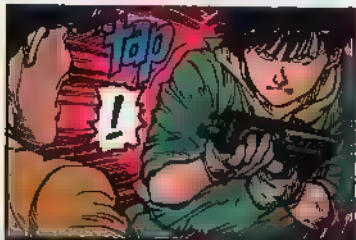
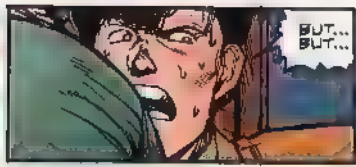
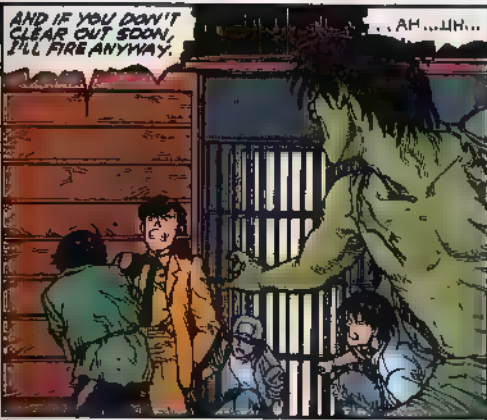
OOA-
AH...



LOOK!

MOST OF THEM
ARE ALMOST DEAD
ALREADY!





TU-WHEET

WHAT THE?

WHU'SAT
SOUND?

YOU HEAR
THAT?

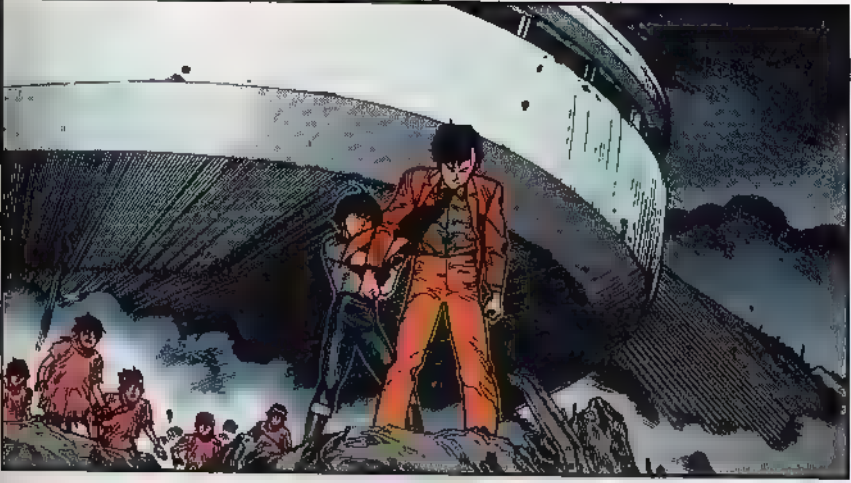
YEAH ..

THEY WANT
US TO
ASSEMBLE

'S THE
ATTACK
OVER?

HURRY!

HELP WITH THE
WOUNDED!



DON'T YOU
KNOW WHEN YOU'RE
BEATEN?!



BEATEN ?

HAVE
WE BEEN
BEATEN ?

I GUESS
SO



NOW DROP THOSE
GUNS BEFORE WE
KILL YOUR LEADER--

--AND KICK YOUR
BUTTS AGAIN!



KLUUNK

SKUFF
SKUFF

WE'RE SORRY,
SIR! THE JOB
WAS TOO MUCH
FOR US!

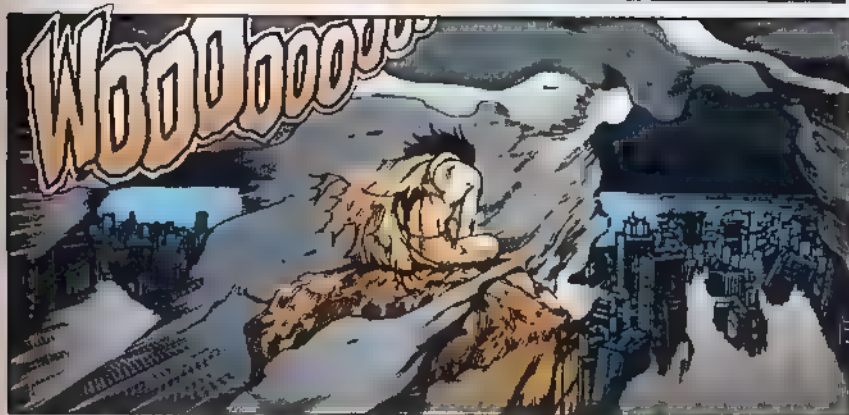
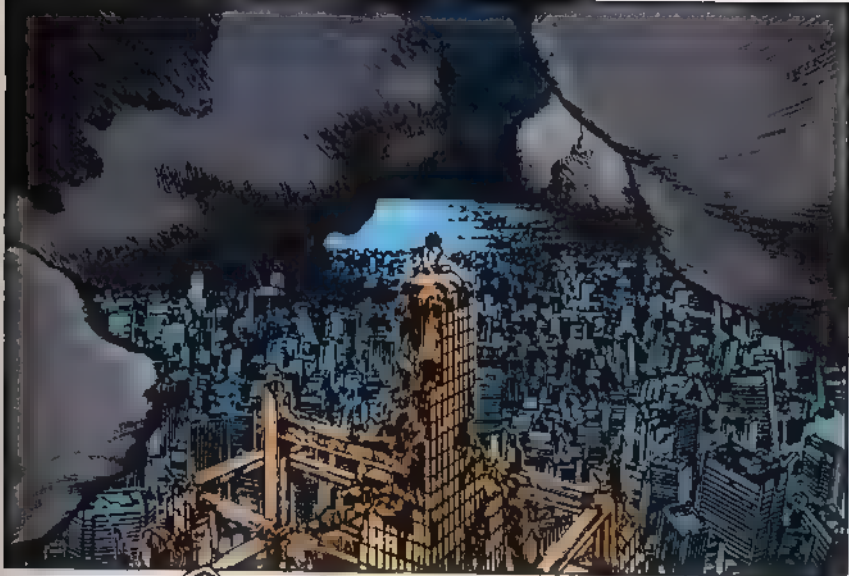


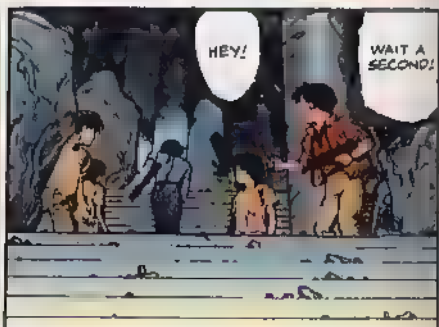
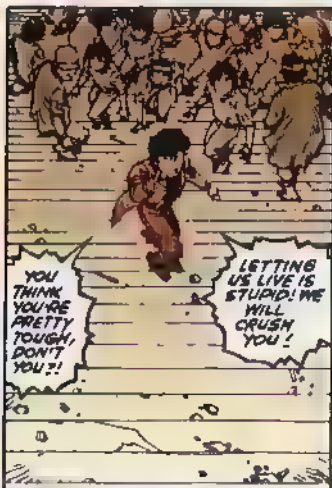
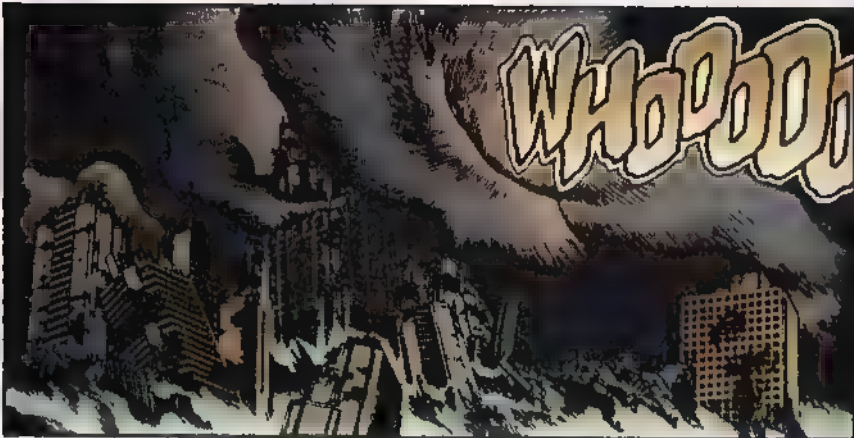
DON'T THINK
YOU'VE BEATEN
US! WE'LL KEEP
SENDING TROOPS
TILL YOU'RE
ALL DEAD!

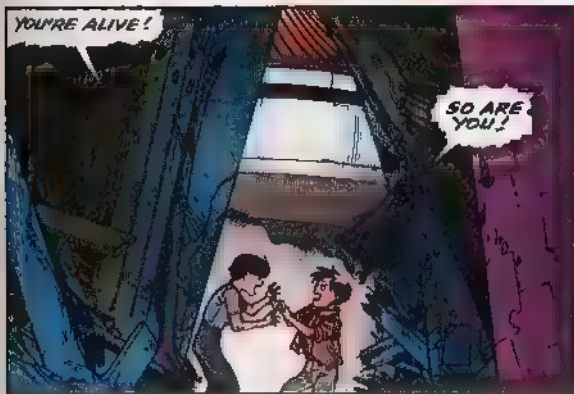
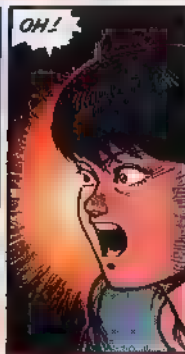
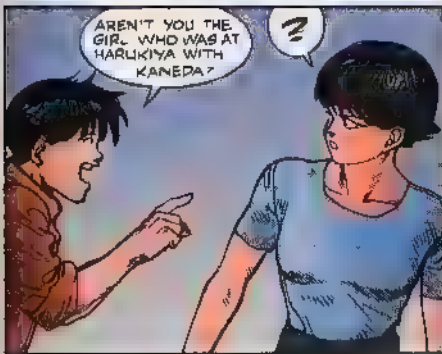
I'M TERRIFIED!

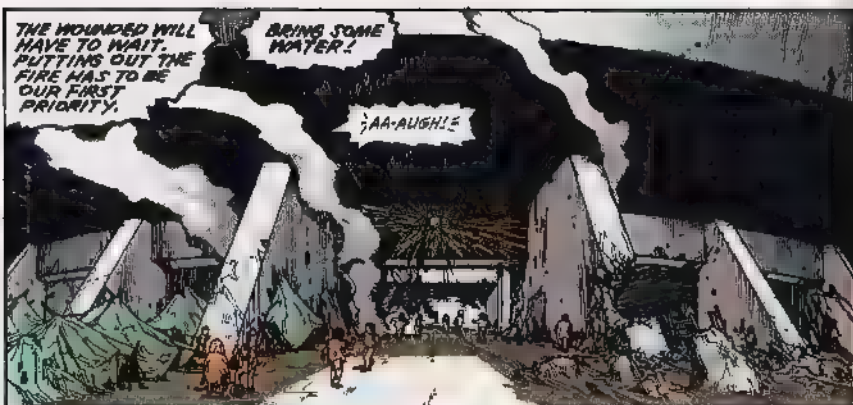
NEXT TIME
TELL TEISUO
TO COME IN
PERSON!







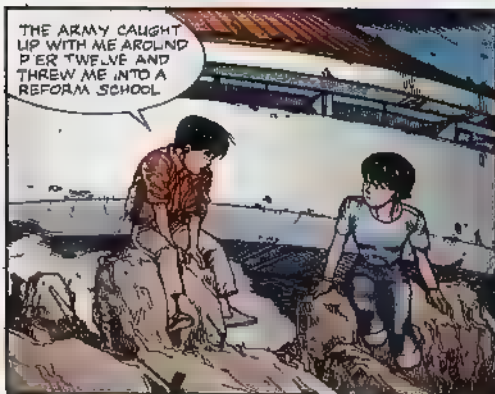




THE WOUNDED WILL
HAVE TO WAIT.
PUTTING OUT THE
FIRE HAS TO BE
OUR FIRST
PRIORITY.

BRING SOME
WATER!

¡AA-AUGHIE



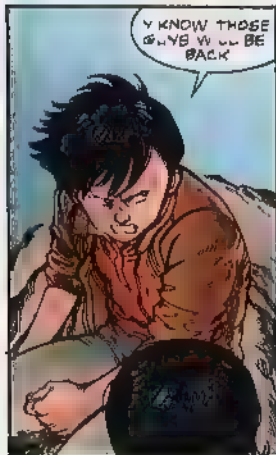
THE ARMY CAUGHT
UP WITH ME AROUND
P.E.R. TWELVE AND
THREW ME INTO A
REFORM SCHOOL



BEING IN
THERE SAVED
MY ASS



IT ALL SEEMS
SO FAR AWAY
NOW... LIKE
ANOTHER
LIFE




Y'KNOW THOSE
GUYS WHO'LL BE
BACK



I'LL HELP YOU
WHEN THEY DO

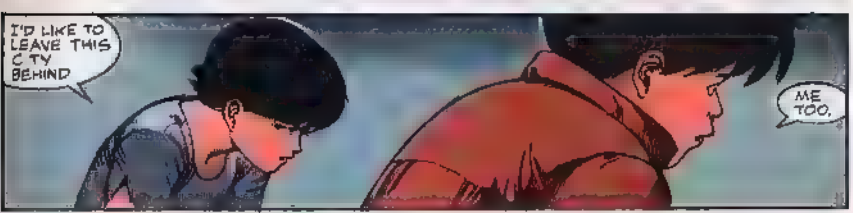


AND I'VE GOT
FRIENDS




FRIENDS... I
WAS PART OF A
PRETTY TOUGH
GROUP MYSELF,
ONCE... WITH
THINGS TO
FIGHT FOR...
GOALS WE
BELIEVED
IN...

NOW, NOTHING MAKES
SENSE... IT'S LIKE
THE DASTER SWEEP
EVERYONE'S IDEALS
AND PRINCIPLES AWAY,
AND EVERYONE
JUST KEEPS
KILLING
EACH
OTHER.




I'D LIKE TO
LEAVE THIS
CITY
BEHIND


ME
TOO.



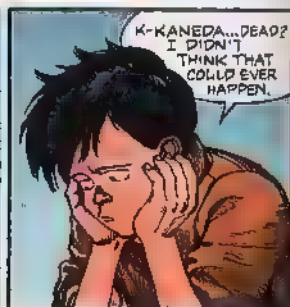
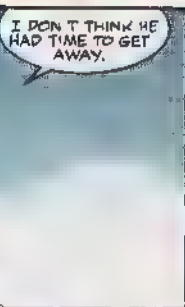
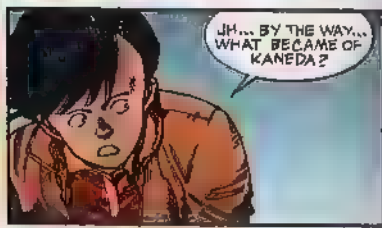
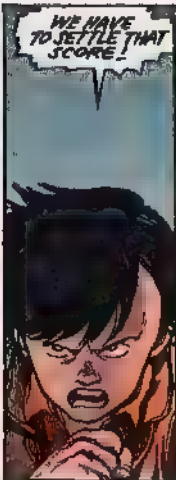
THERE'S PLENTY
OF US WHO FEEL
THE SAME WAY...

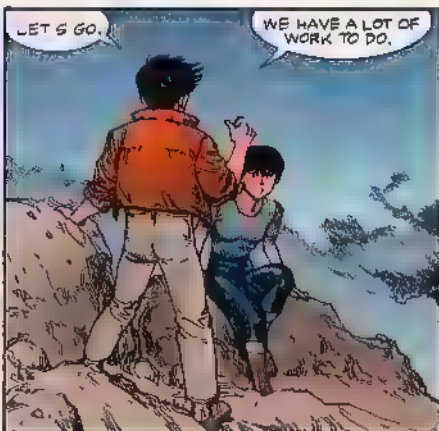
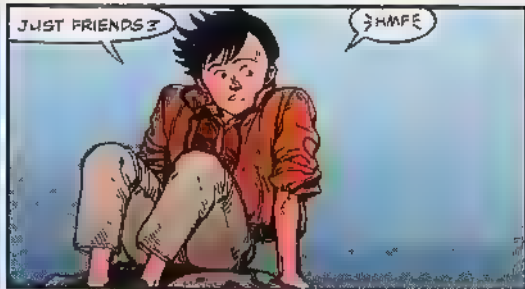


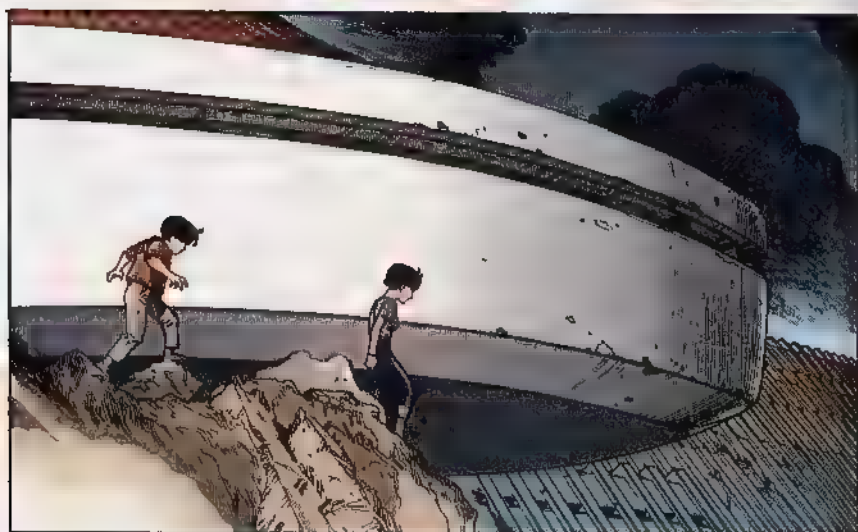
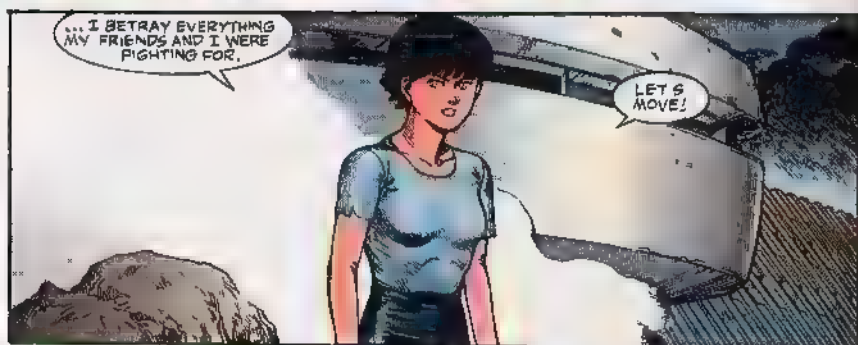
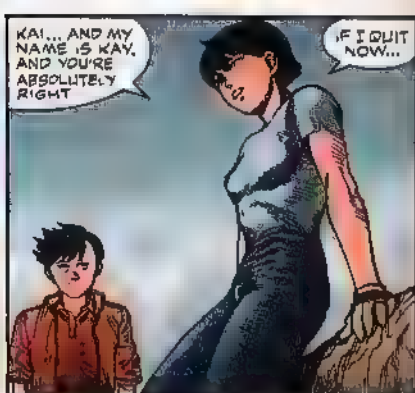
BUT
WE CAN'T JUST
ABANDON NEO-
TOKYO.



DAMN
TETSUO!







SOLDIERS! WE NEED A LOT MORE SOLDIERS!

AND GUNS!

**AND BULLETS!
AND BAZOOKAS!
AND MISSILES!
THAT'S THE TICKET!**

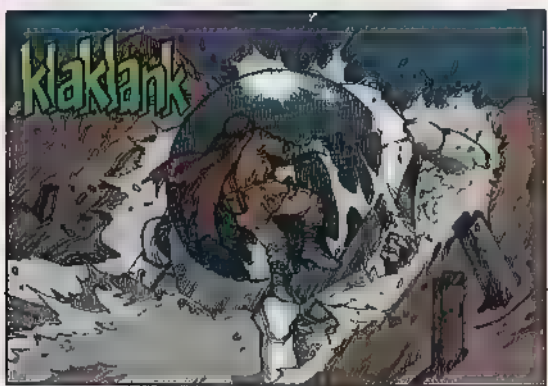


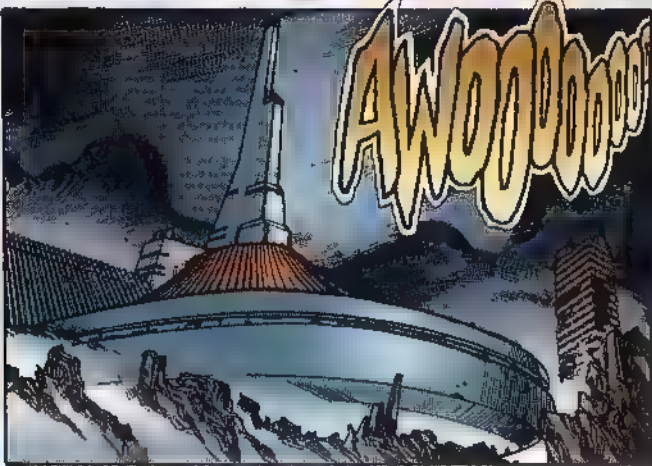
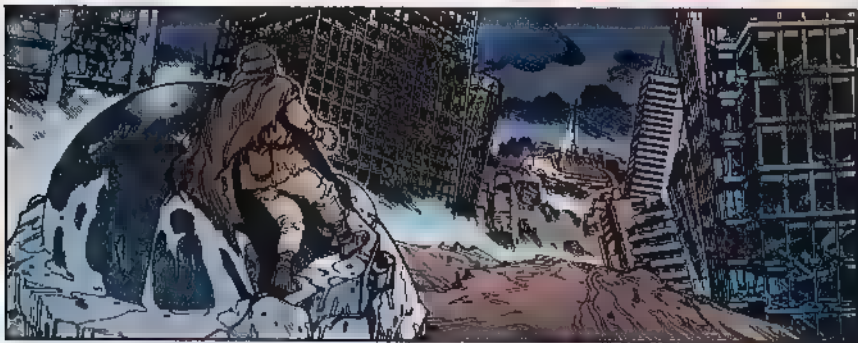
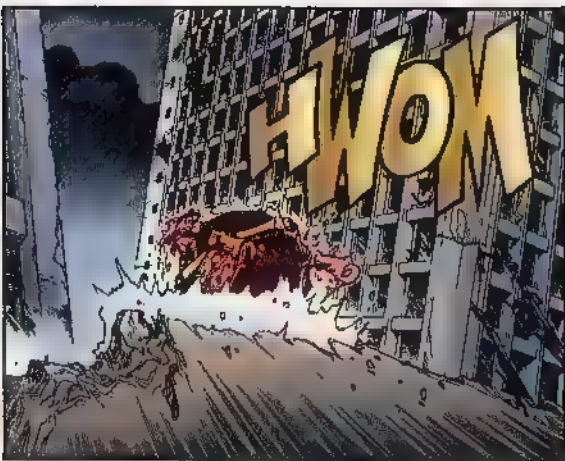
THEY MADE FOOLS OF OUR EMPIRE!

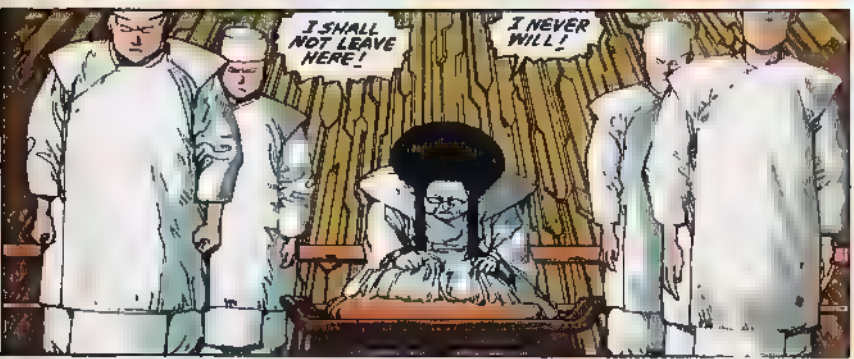
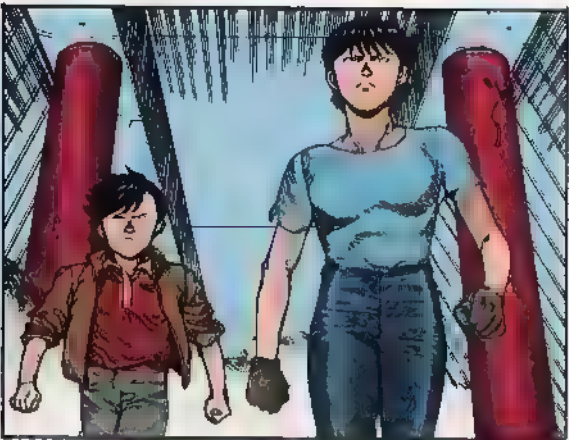
WE'RE GOING BACK THERE IN ONE HOUR!



**WHAT'S WRONG?!
KEEP GOING!**









BUT THEY'LL BE BACK! AND THIS TIME THEY'LL BE BETTER PREPARED!

WE'RE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THEM AGAIN.



AND I THINK NEXT TIME TETSUO WILL COME, TOO.



EVEN IF I WERE WILLING TO FORSAKE MY FOLLOWERS, COULD YOU REALLY ASK ME TO ABANDON THE SICK AND THE HELPLESS.

JUST TO SAVE MYSELF?

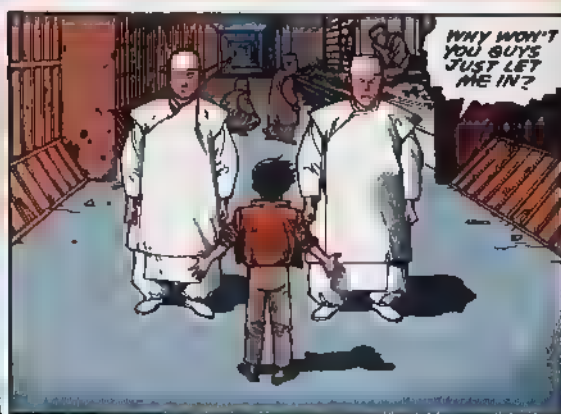


THE ONES THEY WANT ARE YOU, ME, AND NUMBER 27. IF WE AREN'T HERE, THEY MAY LEAVE EVERYONE ELSE ALONE.

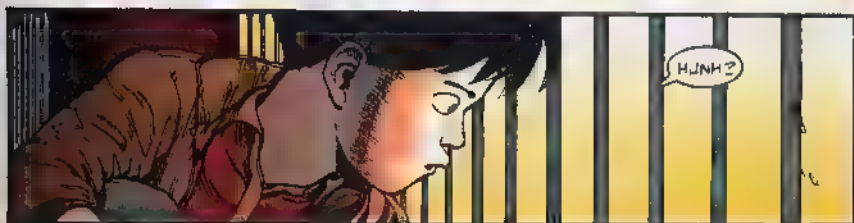
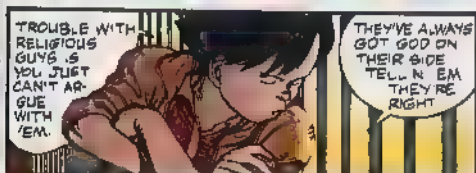
I'M TRYING TO PREVENT MORE SENSELESS BLOODSHED!

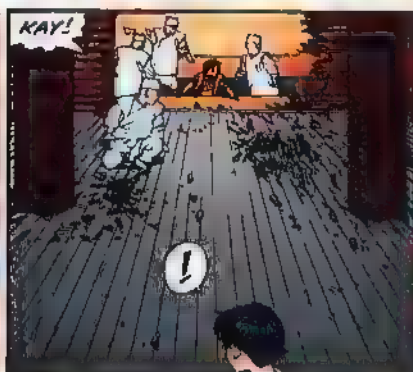
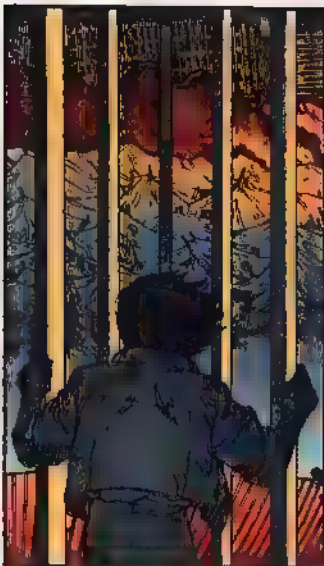


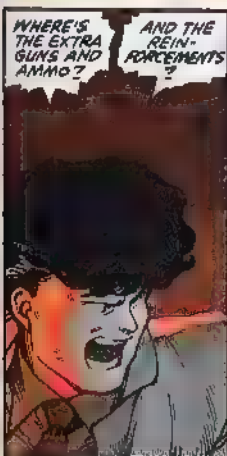
JEEZ.

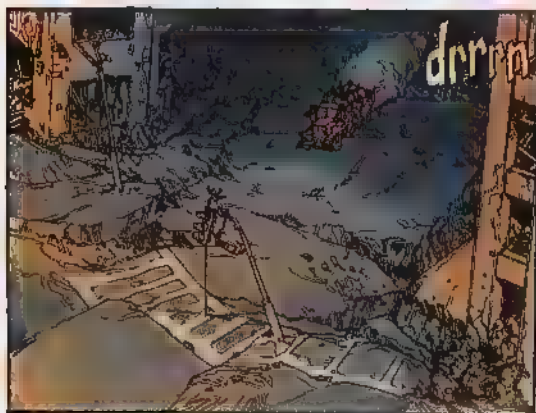


WHY WON'T YOU GUYS JUST LET ME IN?









RRRRRN

WHOA!

NUMBER 41'S
MEN.



AND THEY'RE
ARMED.



OW..

HEY..

ALMOST
THERE!

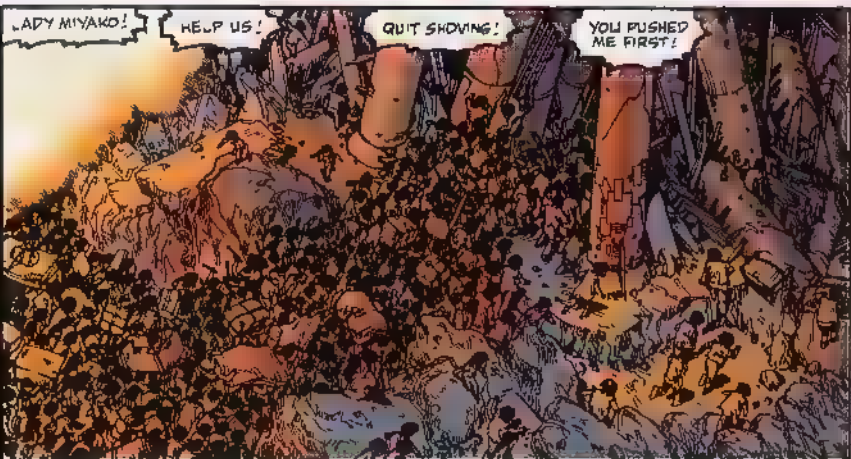
LOOK
OUT!

TURN
HERE!

TO THE
SHRINE!

LET'S GET
THAT
MIYAKO!



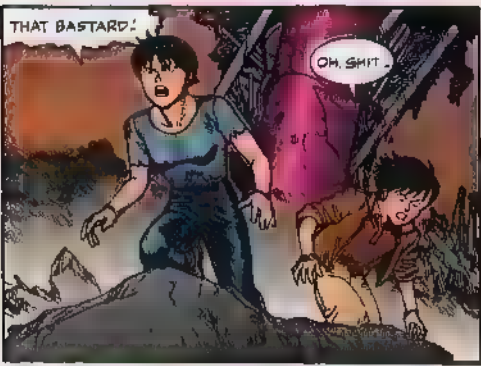


LADY MIYAKO!

HELP US!

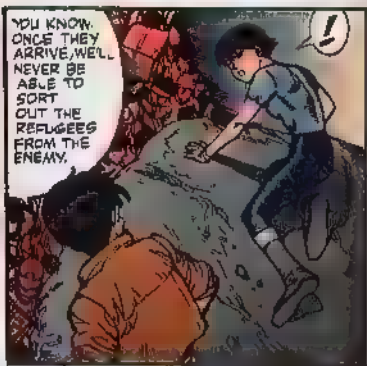
QUIT SHOVING!

YOU PUSHED ME FIRST!



THAT BASTARD!

OH, SHIT.



YOU KNOW, ONCE THEY ARRIVE, WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SORT OUT THE REFUGEES FROM THE ENEMY.

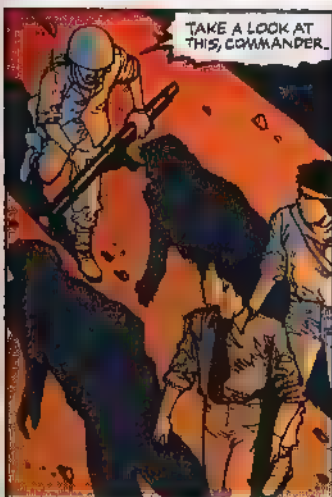
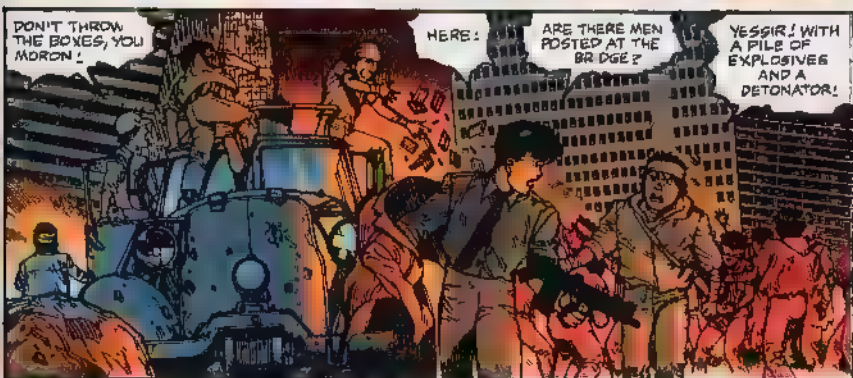
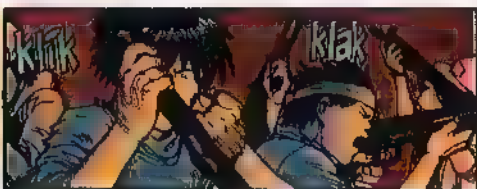


DAMN!

LET'S GO BACK!



LET US THROUGH!



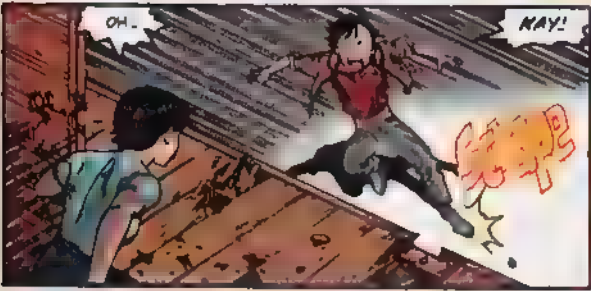
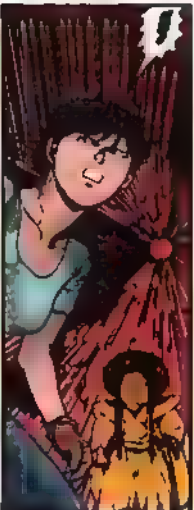
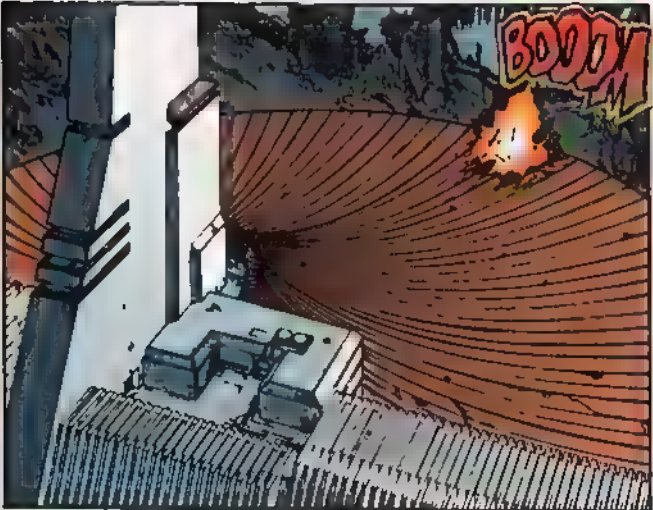
MOVE THE REFUGEES
TO OTHER LEVELS.
I WANT THEM OFF
THIS FLOOR! AND
CLEAR AN ESCAPE
ROUTE!

YOU THINK SOME
OF THEM MIGHT
BE AMONG THE
REFUGEES?

YES!

AND BRING
NUMBER 27
N HERE.







THEY'VE
BLOWN THE
BUGLE FOR
THE FIRST
CHARGE!

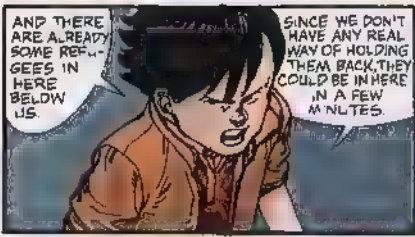


WHAT
DO
WE DO?

GETTING OUT
WILL BE TOUGH



DOWNSTAIRS IS A
ZOO IF WE TRY TO
GET OUT THROUGH
THAT PANIC WE
COULD GET
TRAMPLED



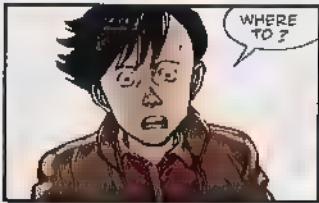
AND THERE
ARE ALREADY
SOME REFUG-
EES IN
HERE
BELOW
US.

SINCE WE DON'T
HAVE ANY REAL
WAY OF HOLDING
THEM BACK, THEY
COULD BE IN HERE
IN A FEW
MINUTES.

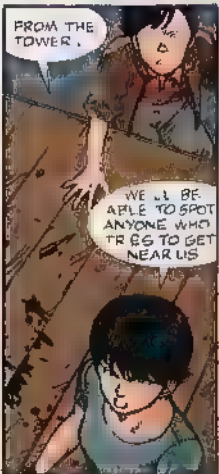


WHATEVER
HAPPENS,
WE DON'T
HAVE
LONG

AS SOON AS
THEY BRING
NUMBER 27 IN,
WE'D BETTER
MAKE OUR
MOVE.



WHERE
TO?



FROM THE
TOWER.

WE'LL BE
ABLE TO SPOT
ANYONE WHO
TRIES TO GET
NEAR US



UP.



EVEN IF
NUMBER 19 WON'T
COME I
THINK SHE'D
APPRECIATE IT
IF WE TOOK CARE
OF NUMBER
27.

NEXT ISSUE. AKIRA'S RAIN

AKIRA: The Movie

Katsuhiro Otomo talks about the animated film.

"I wanted to make a movie that would be a jumble of images, instead of just showing the highlights of each scene. I wanted to show the details, and if such details could be seen as a mosaic of the whole, and in retrospect, if the viewer could recall the movie in that way, then that would fit my intention."

"That's why I created Neo-Tokyo to frame and enhance the image I had of **AKIRA**. Although the movie's title is the name of a child, in fact it does not revolve around any single character. No one person is the main character, yet it is possible for many to be seen as such. All people have drama in their lives, so the plot is simply the intermingling of many such dramas."

"The final sequences for this movie were intended for the original story. I had expected for a long time to end the story with a nostalgic conversation between Kaneda and Tetsuo. In the original story, however, I was unable to control that because the characters seemed to go their own way. Once they gain their own momentum, it is difficult even for the creator to halt them—so the ending must be planned well in advance."

One of the problems I had in creating this movie was connecting the scenes. Although I had sufficient images from the script to cover the major scenes, the problem was linking the ones leading to the climax. Another problem was the flow or tempo of the story. Because the movie had to fit within a framework of two hours, it was important not to waste any time when cutting to other scenes. In comic stories, one is allowed greater freedom to digress, but if you try the same thing in a movie, it loses its clarity and sharpness."



"When I was working on the storyboards, I kept the consideration of animation always in mind, but it was very difficult. There were so many simple scenes, such as a character walking toward the camera, which makes things difficult. On T.V. the camera can pan to the upper sections, but in this movie the character's whole body had to be in view, and its movements had to seem lifelike. The many such supposedly simple scenes like these created the greatest problems for me."

"In the final sequences, which feature Tetsuo's transformation, a lot of the action can only be captured by animation. To show such scenes with a sense of realism depends a lot on the appearance of the backgrounds. If a comic character is established from the beginning, even realistic endings do not change that first impression. The viewer suspends disbelief in the character and is not surprised by anything that happens. For example, in order to show spectacular scenes or extraordinary powers, the artist has to depict normal backgrounds and scenes with a great sense of reality. In so doing, the scenes of devastation take on an added sense of realism. I also pay much attention to the value of artwork and color in enhancing reality."

"I feel that everyone does this in all movies; if the audience doesn't believe in the character, then the movie will be a failure. So it is very necessary to create a sense of reality for the story to develop."

AKIRA: the movie AN UPDATE

Upcoming **AKIRA** dates include:

**BOSTON AREA
BROOKLINE, MA
COOLIDGE CORNER MOVIEHOUSE
August 31–September 13**

**KEENE, NH
PUTNAM SCREENING ROOM
September 7–9**

**WICHITA, KS
NORTH ROCK SIX
September 13**

**WATERVILLE, ME
RAILROAD SQUARE CINEMA
September 14–20**

**NORTHAMPTON, MA
PLEASANT STREET THEATER
September 19–25**

Also, look for **AKIRA** in New York City at the New Film Forum in early Fall.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

writer/illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI

SATOSHI TAKABATAKE

assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA

designer • AKIRA calligraphy

AKIRA SAITO

designer • Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd

YOKO UMEZAWA

translation

KOICHI YURI

HISATAKA NISHITANI

editor • Kodansha edition

YUKA ANDO

editorial coordinator • Tokyo

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI

managing editor • New York

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY

english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF

with the

OLYOPTICS COMPUTER CREW

colorists

MICHAEL HIGGINS

letterer

STEVE ALEXANDROV

production

MARIE JAVINS

assistant editor

MARGARET CLARK

editor

CARL POTTS

executive editor

Amidst the chaos still rolling through

Neo-Tokyo, Lady Miyako's temple was once a refuge, a place of comfort and healing for the troubled injured masses. Once...but no more—now it is a trap, four walls that allow no escape from Tetsuo's aide and the army he's assembled to advance his own power. The army drives forward ruthlessly, intent on seizing Kay and the psychic child, Masaru, crushing back Lady Miyako and her monks—modern weaponry against mental telepathy, the only common ground between the pool of red spreading out around them both...

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

